

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 /063 W

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R 091336Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2459

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 0101

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CS, PN, CU

SUBJECT: TORRIJOS' VISIT TO CUBA

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH ME JANUARY 7, PRESIDENT ODUBER REMARKED THAT TORRIJOS' FORTHCOMING VISIT TO CUBA WAS PLANNED SOME TIME AGO, PRIMARILY TO SHORE UP HIS IMAGE AS A THIRD-WORLD LEADER AND ALSO TO SECURE FURTHER SUPPORT FOR PANAMA'S POSITION ON CANAL ZONE QUESTION. WHEN I EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT TORRIJOS NEEDED TO GO THAT FAR TO GET CUBAN SUPPORT ON THIS ISSUE, ODUBER AGREED BUT SAID A TRIP WOULD BE IMPORTANT FOR TORRIJOS' IMAGE WITHIN PANAMA. ODUBER ADDED THAT TORRIJOS NOW SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED BY PLANNED VISIT BECAUSE OF THE WELL-PUBLICIZED CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA. HOWEVER, HE FEELS THAT HE HAS TO PROCEED WITH IT.

2. ODUBER SAID DURING HIS VISIT TO PANAMA LAST MONTH HE HAD URGED TORRIJOS TO APPEAL TO CASTRO FOR RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS. IN RESPONSE MY QUESTION, ODUBER SAID IT UNLIKELY MATOS WOULD BE RELEASED, BECAUSE CASTRO FEARS DOING ANYTHING THAT MIGHT HELP TO STRENGTHEN ANTI-CASTRO LEADERSHIP OUTSIDE CUBA.

3. ODUBER SAID AT TIME OF LAST OAS MEETING WHEN FREEDOM OF ACTION RESOLUTION WAS PASSED, MANY PEOPLE WERE HOPEFUL THAT

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CUBA WOULD GRADUALLY BECOME A PARTICIPATING MEMBER OF THE LATIN

AMERICAN COMMUNITY. HOWEVER, MANY WERE NOT SO CERTAIN ANY MORE.
DURING THAT EARLIER PERIOD COSTA RICA HAD AGREED TO HAVE
CONSULAR RELATIONS WITH CUBA BUT ODUBER WOULD NOW BE VERY CARE-
FUL AND MOVE SLOWLY IN IMPLEMENTING THAT AGREEMENT. ODUBER
ALSO TO CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS IN CONCERT WITH OTHER LIKE-MINDED
PRESIDENTS IN THE AREA, TO DO WHATEVER IS POSSIBLE TO PREVENT
OR COUNTER THE GROWTH OF CUBAN INFLUENCE IN THE
CARRIBBEAN.
TODMAN

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Message Attributes

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